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# Praise and Blame: The Rhetorical Impact of Nineteenth-Century Conduct Manuals

Jessica Nicole Mattson

Western Kentucky University, [jessica.mattson@yahoo.com](mailto:jessica.mattson@yahoo.com)

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PRAISE AND BLAME: THE RHETORICAL IMPACT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
CONDUCT MANUALS

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of English  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

By  
Jessica Nicole Mattson

August 2010

**PRAISE AND BLAME: THE RHETORICAL IMPACT OF NINETEENTH-  
CENTURY CONDUCT MANUALS**

Date Recommended: May 26, 2010

Dr. Jane Fife  
Director of Thesis

Dr. Kelly Reames

Dr. Lloyd Davies

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Dean, Graduate Studies and Research      Date

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PRAISE AND BLAME: THE RHETORICAL IMPACT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
CONDUCT MANUALS

Jessica Nicole Mattson

August 2010

63 pages

Directed by: Jane Fife, Kelly Reames, and Lloyd Davies

Department of English

Western Kentucky University

The following is an exploration of the use of epideictic rhetoric strategies in nineteenth-century conduct manuals, Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*, and Harriet Martineau's *Household Education*. In examining the rhetoric of the conduct manuals, this researcher has identified the audience, the rhetorical situation, the exigence of that situation, and the use of *phronisis*, *areti*, and *euonia* by both authors.

Because the rhetoric of the conduct manual has not been discussed in current critical perspectives, this research is a starting point for further study. The different types of rhetorical strategies used by each author are the focal points used to uncover how epideictic rhetoric can be understood beyond the restrictions of funeral orations and ceremonial speeches. The primary critical research used in this project has been that focused on epideictic rhetoric and the conduct manuals themselves.

## Introduction

In 1839, Sarah Stickney Ellis, with the publication of her book *The Women of England*, suggests that her readers value the moral behavior of the previous generation in the domestic sphere. In contrast, in 1849 ten years later Harriet Martineau introduced women to *Household Education*, in which she offered observations of the importance of continuing practices of education in the domestic sphere, so that the audience could make decisions about their own lives. Women of the time were defined by their domestic abilities; therefore, the guidebooks or advice manuals were exceedingly popular for women readers. Because “[c]onduct books espoused the value of woman's education and development, but strictly within the confines of her proper role; the goal was that her improvement would make her a better wife, mother, and homemaker” (“Conduct Books in Nineteenth-Century Literature”). Since these books were written with the distinct purpose of improving the domestic woman, they had to use a rhetoric that would appeal to her.

Being relegated to the domestic sphere did constrict women, but they were not defined simply by an ability to perform household duties adequately. As the quote that follows attests, the domestic sphere included far more than household duties: “to her [the domestic woman] went authority over the household, leisure time, courtship procedures, and kinship relations, and under her jurisdiction the most basic qualities of human identity were supposed to develop” (Armstrong 3); however, because the public sphere belonged to men, women were highly scrutinized and oftentimes chastised for attempting to take part in that sphere. Carol Mattingly suggests that “Women were identified as feminine primarily according to the visual presentation of their bodies, especially with

regard to dress, and according to location, a specifically designed sphere” (xiii). The writings of Ellis and Martineau were focused on the domestic sphere because it identifies with the domestic ideology in the home.

Sarah Stickney Ellis was a prolific writer of conduct literature during her lifetime, while Harriet Martineau was a writer of diverse social commentary. These two authors were chosen here for several reasons: 1) they were both very popular during their lifetimes; 2) they published these texts within ten years of one another; and 3) they use significantly different methods to persuade their audience. Although these two authors are both very different in terms of their style and method, their overall message in *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* and *Household Education* is the same: continuing domestic expertise.

Conduct manuals and etiquette guides were written to offer advice to, primarily, middle-class families. They were used to provide a practical approach to education, household management and economy, as well as varying social habits. The language in these books or periodicals is instructional with a very distinct Christian persuasion. Many of the women who compose these guides or manuals use their own experience to offer advice to their peers, and, in doing so, they suggest a conformity to ideology based on the expectations of the patriarchy. Conduct manuals or guides were written with the distinct purpose of getting the middle-class family to conform to a set of social standards suggested by society, and the nature of their influence was dependant on the manuals’ authors’ ability to create a form of idealistic femininity in the manual’s presentation of the narrator. In the nineteenth century women had three primary functions: 1) they were to be respectable wives whose primary concern was to make their husbands and families



comfortable; 2) they had to properly manage the household, which entailed both knowing how to do the servants' work and overseeing that it was done properly; and 3) they were to be good mothers, at least in as much as their social station would allow. Conduct manuals were written to provide information to the newly married woman on her impending domestic duties.

Girls' education in the nineteenth century had to be multifaceted enough that when they married and were put in charge of their own households, they could undertake any task that may be required. Judith Rowbotham notes, as girls became educated, the understanding was, that their "lessons could help in the efficient performance of household duties at all levels of middle-class society" (116). The domestic woman "was not to forget that [. . . her . . .] highest role in life was at the centre of a home"; therefore, "a girl's education had to cover many lessons that could be best learned outside the schoolroom" (124). Middle-class female education required an understanding of domestic duties and the understanding that these girls, once women, would have to know the basics of various skills, such as chemistry, for cooking; mathematics, to keep an eye on the family's finances; and written language skill, for letters and advertisements. Therefore, "in order to ensure that work was properly done, it was important that every mistress of a household should know precisely how to do properly every task that ensured its smooth running, so she could teach her servants how to do it" (Rowbotham 125). Depending on the family station in the class hierarchy, women's knowledge of domestic responsibilities had to be fairly extensive.

The role of women during the nineteenth century was correlated to a man's economic position. While "men earned the money, women had the important task of

managing those funds towards the acquisition of social and political status” (Langland 123). The woman’s role in her family’s movement within the social hierarchy was fully explained in the conduct manuals and etiquette guides, and these guides provided women with the information necessary in relation to their understanding of life (Langland 123). Because of the rise of the Industrial Revolution and dramatic changes in the class structure, women were becoming more valuable toward their husbands’ roles in politics; “status became a fluid thing, increasingly dependent upon the manipulation of social signs” (Langland 124), so the family status became more and more dependent on women’s abilities to comprehend society’s rules. The growing dependency on women’s ability to navigate through society spawned the conduct manual’s popularity among the middle and upper classes because they were “precise and detailed, giving exact information, particularly on the most sensitive areas governed by etiquette” (Langland 125). Not only do the guides and manuals reveal a “pervasive awareness of and commitment to the class distinctions they create and reinforce” (Langland 125), they offer insight into the social expectations placed on middle- and upper-class women in their relation to their family’s place on the social ladder.

The conduct manuals or guides helped create and perpetuate the socially conditioned proper roles for men and women. These proper roles were characterized by the fact that “middle-class Victorian homes. . . were hierarchical, starkly polarized along gender lines, and hand in glove with the ideology of capitalist competition” with the “‘glove’ of course being the cultivation (and isolation) of feminine virtues within the home that made possible, and bearable, the male’s ventures into a world of commerce and the cash nexus” (Hughes and Lund 15). This notion of the domestic world working to

counteract the commercial world's effects on the family is seen in the conduct manuals' representation of a very specific domestic ideology functioning on the premise that the woman's role was defined by her ability to intercept the commercial world at her doorstep and keep it there.

This review of conduct manuals presented thus far in recent scholarship shows the manuals creating and reinforcing a direct and unquestionable version of domestic ideology, but strategic comparisons of certain manuals can reveal a more complex rhetorical relationship to the values of the time. Some manuals were presenting the domestic ideology as a frame to initiate change and/or reform. Both Ellis and Martineau attempt to persuade their audience to modify their domestic experience, so it is important to acknowledge, as Mark Bernard White suggests in reference to African American didactic literature, that "rhetoric [. . .] is shaped for and in anticipation of an audience" and "understanding the characteristics of a particular audience in a specific situation" (128) must be accomplished in order to accurately grasp the author's purpose. As White explains, "epideictic rhetoric can function to edify character by calling or challenging its audience to become their better, nobler, braver, and more virtuous selves" (130). White says "Epideictic often does not seem 'rhetorical' compared with forensic and deliberative [rhetorics]. Its power to persuade and to shape character derives in significant part from its appeal to a sense of identity and to values that are intended to go unquestioned" (130). Ellis's and Martineau's appeals to their audience in the rhetoric of domestic ideology reveal the purpose of their discourse in this ongoing cultural debate. The conduct manuals did not participate directly in rhetoric of change, yet contribute in subtle ways to the ongoing debate about women's roles.

In the following analysis, I will be looking for contextual signs in Ellis's and Martineau's respective works to understand how they were able to persuade their audience and define their rhetorical situation in order to create an appropriate *ethos* to advise their readers. Conduct manuals serve as didactic literature for women in that they help define the responsibilities of women in that sphere, i.e. in household management strategies which translate to business strategies ("Management" and Wensley), in educational practices (de Bellaigue and Rogers), and in the first venues for institutionalized recipes (Beeton). They were considered appropriate reading material for women to improve themselves (Ashworth). Conduct manuals were also used as a venue for social reform by extending housekeeping metaphors into the public sphere (Cleere 477). I will examine the rhetoric of the conduct manual in order to understand more clearly the methods used in them to initiate change and improvement in the situation of women. Their role in changing women's lives underscores the importance of this genre of women's writing.

According to Aristotle's classical rhetoric, the ideal rhetor is someone who is trustworthy when "the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust men of probity more, and more quickly, about things in general, while [in] points outside of the exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely" (8). The requirements of an ideal rhetor incorporate the "three things that gain our belief, namely, intelligence, character and good will" (92). Because both Ellis and Martineau focus much of their texts on building a relationship with their audience, their ability to incorporate all of these values shows their knowledge of the role of rhetor in the context they are writing. They both understand that it is "the speaker who is thought to have all

these qualities [who] has the confidence of his hearers” (Aristotle 92). Ellis and Martineau incorporate all of these qualities for their audience in their use of *areti* (virtue), *phronisis* (practical wisdom), and *euonia* (good will).

The audience demographic both Ellis and Martineau wrote to was newly married women, whose education had been limited by their sex; they were upper-middle class, and generally Christian in their beliefs. Ellis makes this clear as she exposes women who are too busy with social activities to make time for their domestic duties, while Martineau simply explains that it would be in any middle-class family’s interest to ensure an advantageous education for its children. Therefore, Ellis and Martineau had to build themselves up to be credible advisors, avoiding the trappings of failing credibility as rhetors, so they had to make use of a rhetoric that would help them do so. Aristotle explains that

Speakers are untrustworthy in what they say or advise from one or more of the following causes. Either through want of intelligence they form wrong opinions; or, while they form correct opinions, their rascality leads them to say what they do not think; or while intelligent and honest enough, they are not well-disposed, and so perchance will fail to advise the best course, though they see it (92).

Because Ellis and Martineau had to avoid failing in their credibility as advisors, they had to use social ideals as praiseworthy attributes. Their rhetoric helps to provide them with the necessary credibility to persuade their audiences to action. Because “audiences are prone to accept the arguments of writers or speakers who are trusted and respected” (Beason 326), the fact that both Ellis and Martineau had previously published various influential works gave them a reputation that made them credible even before they

published *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839) and *Household Education* (1849).

Lloyd Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation as “the situation which calls the discourse into existence” (218). This is an important concept because it allows detailed exploration into the use of epideictic rhetoric and the values presented by both Ellis and Martineau in terms of their ability to recognize and initiate change using a national value system in their discourse. Bitzer believes that “rhetorical discourse is called into existence by situation; the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse” (222). Therefore, identifying the rhetorical situation of both Ellis and Martineau’s writings is vital to understand their rhetorical goals. Bitzer says a “rhetorical situation” is the “nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse” (217), and this “discourse” is vital to the conduct manual because of the advice it offers its readers. Bitzer argues that “the rhetorical transactions [are not] simply a response of the speaker to the demands or expectations of an audience, for the expectations of the audience were keyed to a [. . .] historic fact” that included social norms or expectations (222).

Richard E. Vatz, on the other hand, suggests that Bitzer’s “statements [on the rhetorical situation] may ostensibly describe situations, but they actually inform us as to the phenomenological perspective of the speaker” (154). While Bitzer says that the situation calls the rhetoric or discourse into existence, Vatz says that it is the rhetor’s interpretation of the situation that creates the discourse. Vatz says “these statements do not imply ‘situational characteristics’ at all” (154), but “the facts or events communicated to us are choices, by our sources of information” (156). In Vatz’s understanding of the

rhetorical situation, the rhetor's credibility is a question of the rhetors' perception of the situation for which the individual is writing.

In exploring the credibility of both Ellis and Martineau, it is important to understand, as Larry Beason asserts, that "some extra-textual factors help shape an *ethos*" such as "the communicator's reputation" (327). Ellis and Martineau's *ethos* is a function of their relationship with their audience; furthermore, "an audience's perception of message and communicator are highly interrelated, often indistinguishable" (328). Because the reputation of both Ellis and Martineau plays such an important role in their *ethos*, it is understandable that "the communicator's persona is moved toward the forefront of the message, offering what is likely the most conspicuous opportunity—whether intended or not—for an audience to focus on what the text suggests about the communicator as a person" (Beason 328). Therefore, their previous publications are one aspect helping Ellis and Martineau's audiences perceive them as credible advisors. Furthermore, Beason's assertion that "the signalled appeal is rarely so overt that the audience will readily detect a deliberate attempt to be won over with a gratifying persona" (329) helps to frame the importance of the methods Ellis and Martineau use to build a relationship with their audience.

It is imperative that the values of the rhetors, their *ethos*, and methods be understood in the terms in which they have been socially ascribed, specifically as they are elevated to national crises. As Dow suggests that crisis rhetoric, for instance, should be studied in such a way as to "be informed by an understanding of the differing exigencies that give rise to it, [. . . that . . .] different crisis situations call for different rhetorical responses, [. . . and that . . .] the rhetoric functions to respond to the exigence created by

the situation” (295). This is very similar to my work with Ellis and Martineau; however, I am evaluating their use of epideictic rhetoric to enact change in the domestic sphere. Therefore, the rhetor’s interpretation of the exigence as a national crisis through her values shows that each rhetor interprets the rhetorical situation in a different way, which, for Ellis and Martineau focus on the domestic ideology that revolves around separate spheres. The audience “cannot understand fully the meaning of an event, however, until it is placed within a context that aligns it with past experiences and the beliefs and values that govern their understanding of such experiences” (Dow 298). Ellis and Martineau clarify their rhetorical situations by addressing the value system their audience believes in to make the case for persuading them, while always implying that the audience agrees with them.

While Dow is looking at the epideictic nature of presidential crisis rhetoric and the effects it produces in the audience, I will be exploring the crisis rhetoric created by the epideictic nature of conduct manuals and their audiences’ values. Through this analysis, it is clear that Ellis and Martineau describe the values and character of their audience in contrast to those women who would not be interested in their insightful explications on the domestic responsibilities of women, or those women not interested in domestic improvement. While Dow suggests it is important to “transcend the immediacy” of an incident to “place them [the incidents] in a broader framework that emphasized values” (299), Ellis and Martineau do exactly that with their inquiries into the domestic ideology of their day.

Ellis and Martineau were writing conduct manuals to the domestic woman in her role as educator, wife, mother, and household manager. These roles are pivotal to the



creation of the texts Ellis and Martineau wrote, as well as the authors' complex interpretation of perfection. Because Ellis and Martineau address a very specific audience, the manuals had very specific goals. Their audience informs their writing by somewhat restricting their subject matter, but it also forces them to invoke the ideology of separate spheres, the public (masculine) sphere and the domestic (feminine) sphere. While Ellis is writing to the newly married woman who is taking on the responsibility of household manager, Martineau is writing to the new mother who is going to be taking on the role of educator for her children. Although they are writing to the domestic woman in different stages, they are essentially writing to the same domestic women.

While Ellis perpetuates the representation of the Angel in the House, Martineau emphasizes women's role as educator for their families. Both women recognize that "life within the Victorian home was seen as a continuing sequence of nonreversible stages, whether applied to courtship leading to marriage, marriage itself, or child rearing" (Hughes and Lund 15). While Ellis focuses on marriage and child rearing, Martineau focuses on the educational duties of the family in the home. Because the conduct manuals advised on the domestic ideology of the Victorian era, their influence on the domestic sphere of life helped to shape it. Furthermore, the

Victorians' complete ideology of home [ . . . ] suggested a larger, gradually occurring and non-reversible sequence that embraced not only engagement and marriage but also the begetting and raising of children, the emergence into late maturity and grandparenthood, and then death that itself led to ongoing spiritual life in which, many Victorians fervently hoped personal relationships persisted (Hughes and Lund 17).

While the conduct manuals tackled many of these portions of the “sequence” in a Victorian woman’s life, Ellis and Martineau focus their attention on various aspects of the domestic responsibilities of women.

I am proposing that Ellis and Martineau’s conduct manuals be considered epideictic rhetoric because they attach themselves to and attempt to change the values of their audience and make use of praise and blame in shaping and defining those values. While others have discussed African American didactic literature and women’s periodicals as genres of epideictic rhetoric, the notion that the conduct manual adds to that genre provides another layer to acknowledging epideictic rhetoric outside of the traditional ceremonial speeches and discourse. Kathryn Summers states that “epideictic rhetoric, most frequently defined as the persuasive use of praise and blame, plays a central role in negotiating values and belief” (263). Furthermore, “any rhetorical tool has ideological implications, [. . . and can be . . .] complicated and shaped by their rhetorical practices” (277). She suggests that “the use of epideictic rhetoric [. . .] to advocate reform was both empowering and constraining” because “epideictic rhetoric was (and continues to be) a powerful tool” (277) to challenge the value system the rhetor is attempting to change. While the manuals are not written to emphasize a debate about the construction of contrasting rhetorical situations, their strategies help us appreciate their subtle contribution to this ongoing debate about values.

In chapter one, the goal is to show how Ellis defines her rhetorical situation as impacting the welfare of the nation and how she is able to bring the “moral improvement” of British women to the forefront of her particular situation in order to initiate that improvement. Because women were identified primarily by their domestic

responsibilities, Ellis focuses on the domestic sphere as a place for change. Ellis uses metaphors and national crisis rhetoric to initiate improvement, appealing to the audience's values in the domestic sphere because of the significance placed on women in the domestic sphere and in the social hierarchy. Ellis builds her *ethos* by appealing to the domestic ideology and acknowledging the role of women on a national scale.

In chapter two the focus is on Martineau's purpose in creating a dialogue with her peers. In order to do so, she must identify with the values of her audience to help them initiate change in the education they provide to their children and families. Although in *Household Education* Martineau denies that anyone can have complete authority, she makes sure to show her audience, through narratives, the dichotomous nature of education. Martineau frames her rhetoric in the prose of the domestic ideology in order to initiate change in education. To do so, Martineau builds a community with her audience by aligning with their value system.

The third and final chapter focuses on the ways in which each author, Ellis and Martineau, uses the values of her audience and praise and blame to make appeals to change or improve society. Because both women praise and blame throughout their texts and use a value laden discourse to do so, my claim is the conduct manual should be viewed as a genre of epideictic rhetoric based on current theories of epideictic rhetoric and Aristotelian notions of epideictic rhetoric. Because the conduct manual writers, Ellis and Martineau, recognize and are able to represent their audiences' value system, adapting it in some cases to serve their individual purposes, the conduct manual represents, clearly, a genre of epideictic rhetoric.

## Chapter 1

“We have many valuable dissertations upon female character, as exhibited on the broad scale of virtue; but no direct definition of those minor parts of domestic and social intercourse, which strengthen into habit, and consequently form the basis of moral character” Sarah Stickney Ellis from *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (Preface).

### Introduction

Sarah Stickney Ellis writes, in 1839, *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* in order to advise women on the “basis of moral character” (Preface). Ellis has to create a rhetoric that aligns her with her readers’ values and impresses upon them the value of women’s domestic duties. She is focusing on moral behavior such as the “domestic and social intercourse” required of women. Although Ellis is attempting to induce changes in women, she uses tactics that seem to berate and ridicule the women she hopes to improve; however, she does so to bring her audience to aid in the improvement of the women she is berating. To initiate her audience to aid in the advancement of British women, Ellis defines the rhetorical situation as the loss of “moral character” and places the improvement of that “moral character” on a national level for her audience.

Because the rhetorical situation Ellis describes is problematic to the nation, *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* uses a discourse of national crisis to initiate change. Ellis employs various techniques to persuade her readers to action. The notion of social duty allows her to impress upon her readers the importance of a national value. William Banks points out that, in discussing the importance of putting authors in the context of their time periods, “the writers’ ideas are part of their time periods and the ways of thinking that went on during that time” (1); in the same way,

Ellis expects that her audience will accept the values that she puts forth and recognize her advice as important in helping to define their national identity.

Ellis is using epideictic rhetoric—praising the previous generation of women who value their duty as moral guardians of the domestic sphere and blaming the women of the present generation for their desire for individual attainments and their failing sense of responsibility for their domestic duties. Ellis writes to women who find value in their domestic responsibilities, and she advises them in order to instill the value of women's roles. Ellis defines the exigence of her rhetorical situation in this way: British women are failing the nation by neglecting their domestic duties and focusing their energy on themselves.

### **Rhetorical Situation**

#### *Exigency*

Within the first paragraph, Ellis sets up the domestication of British women as the country's greatest valued characteristic; however, in the very next paragraph she makes readers aware that, nationally, they are "deteriorating in their moral character," which she attributes to the middle-class idealization of the individual (1). According to Ellis, women have become so interested in their "mental faculties [. . . that those have. . .] take[n] precedence of the moral [. . .] which is now beginning to tell upon society in the sickly sensibilities, the feeble frames, and the useless habits of the rising generation" (1-2). As she continues to berate the female population, she notes their inability to take responsibility for their duties. Giving her readers the responsibility of "a nation's moral wealth," she chastises women for their desire to climb the social ladder and charges them with being selfish. Writing to fill a gap in the advice manuals, she says "we have many

valuable dissertations upon female character, [. . .] but no direct definition of those minor parts of domestic and social intercourse [. . . that . . . ] form the basis of moral character” (Preface). In her recognition of the gap in the conduct manuals, Ellis sees “no single work containing the particular minutiae of practical duty” (Preface). To Ellis, the goal for which she writes is “that kindness and compassion, to answer any desirable end, must one be practical, the other delicate, in its nature; that affection must be kept alive by ministering to its necessities; and, above all, that religion must be recommended by consistency of character and conduct” (9-10).

### *Modification*

By comparing women’s domestic duties to men’s work and thereby emphasizing them, Ellis points out the mistaken interpretation of women’s roles being less important than those of their male counterparts’. Ellis places the responsibility and significance of the home and everything in it on the women of England, as “[e]very passing event, however insignificant to the eye of the world, has its crisis, every occurrence its emergency, every cause its effect” (8), which clearly illustrates the rhetoric of crisis she uses throughout *The Women of England*. Furthermore, she uses the repetition of “every” to show the scope of influence coming from the domestic sphere. Ellis defines women’s work in the home in a way that parallels men’s positions in the workforce, suggesting that “in England there is a kind of science of good household management” (9). By elevating the domestic responsibilities of women to a level that is parallel to their male counterparts’, Ellis idealizes women’s roles in the home.

Ellis is idealistic in her representation of the “characteristics of the women of England” and their domestic habits, which she says offer the “threefold recommendation

of promptitude in action, energy of thought, and benevolence of feeling” (7). Ellis projects the ideal that women should spend all their time, effort, and energy making the people of the household happy, and she makes sure her audience is aware of the detrimental effects on these “individuals” if “they [. . .] are allowed to. . .] sink into supineness, or suffer any of their daily duties to be neglected,” (7) because she assumes other members of the household would be put out and the family’s moral center would be removed of its value.

In emphasizing the domestic duties of women, Ellis explains why “no woman can reasonably complain of incapability” in their domestic pursuits (9). She says that “nature has endowed the sex with the perceptions so lively and acute, that where benevolence is the impulse, and principle the foundation upon which they act, experience will soon teach them by what means they may best accomplish the end they have in view” (9). Ellis’s notion that women were placed in the domestic sphere because nature intended it, imposes a specific set of values on the reader. Her readers would have bought into the notion of that “natural endowment,” but those opposing that ideal are the women who were to be taught and corrected by Ellis’s audience; they are those whom Ellis is continuously berating, reprimanding, and ostracizing throughout the text. However, the women Ellis hopes to change are those she believes will not actually read her book. Because Ellis wants her audience to help her improve the women interested in individual improvement, she must point out the need for women to focus on the welfare of their nation and families.

### *Audience*

The audience is clearly identified, as that “estimable class of females [. . .] who

yet enjoy the privilege of liberal education, with exemption from the pecuniary necessities of labour,” and Ellis has “addressed [. . .her. . .] remarks especially to them” (Preface). Ellis clearly wants her readers to understand that they must lead by example, and she prescribes an ideology by which her readers should live in order to serve their families and nation. She relies on the ability to represent ideals with values and a specific moral code her readers could embrace. The rhetorical situation binds Ellis and her audience together because her readers, believing in the domestic ideology, would have wanted to know how to improve the morality of the nation by educating their “bad” peers on their domestic responsibility.

Ellis defines her audience as distinct from the women she hopes to change by using words such as “they” and “the individual” to refer to these targets for change; this strategy helps both her ethos and her ability to use pathos when persuading her readers to action. Explaining the consequences of women’s careless behavior, Ellis explains that “they will soon learn by experience, that selfish- ness [sic] produces selfishness, that indolence increases with every hour of indulgence, that what is left undone because it is difficult to-day, will be doubly difficult to-morrow;” (9) furthermore, the women Ellis hopes her audience will positively influence are the women whose character leads to negative experiences in their life and domestic roles.

Nineteenth-century domestic ideology was built around the desire for women to be the moral center of the man’s world, and their roles were defined by the perception that women improve the moral status of their husbands and families. Ellis defines these women of “mature or advanced age,” the “Angel in the House,” as follows:

Their [the women of England] unpolished and occasionally embarrassed manner,



as frequently conceals a delicacy that imparts the most refined and elevated sentiment to their familiar acts of duty and regard; and those who know them best are compelled to acknowledge, that all the noblest passions, the deepest feelings, and the highest aspirations of humanity, may be found within the brooding quiet of an English woman's heart. (11)

Ellis is able to provide a sense of reasoning behind the cold manner of her own prose by suggesting that it was a common characteristic of the women her audience should aspire to emulate.

Ellis's audience will help create a platform for her purpose and ways to understand her popularity. Based on the subject matter, wifely or feminine duties of the women of England, Ellis cleverly disburses advice to the middle- and upper-middle class woman in reference to her domestic responsibilities. Ellis makes clear that she is not just giving advice but providing the "you," her audience, with the social doctrine they need to improve the "individual[s]" causing the national crisis Ellis describes. Ellis implies that this would be of great value to the women of England because they would, when able to adopt these practices and take pride in their domestic responsibilities, be able to fit into the social hierarchy.

The ways Ellis uses pronouns function as methods of aligning the author with her audience. She makes use of first, second, and third person pronouns in an attempt to construct her readers as good women who must educate and change the lazy women who are the focus of Ellis's impending crisis. Ellis uses "I" and "you" frequently. Because she writes to the women of England and focuses more precisely on the upper-middle class women, Ellis's use of "you" impresses how much she is pointing her rhetorical finger at

her readers, giving them responsibility for the improvement of the state of domestic affairs. Her use of “I” is common; she uses it as a way to clarify her points. This use of the first-person pronouns, especially in statements such as “I am also fully sensible of,” “Still my opinion remains the same” (10), and “Much as I have said of the influence of the domestic habits of my countrywomen” (14), epitomizes Beason’s notion of deference, which “shows a sentiment of regard for the recipient and is important in setting a tone” (335). Furthermore, Beason says that deference helps “a communicator [. . .] appear respectful and cooperative, attributes which help avoid the all-too-common situation that occurs when people disagree simply because they see one another as inflexible and arrogant” (333). Ellis’s deference allows her audience to accept her as a rhetor.

Ellis makes a slight shift away from placing responsibility on her readers to pointing the finger at general types of people, and she uses language like “individuals” and “them” to point out that her readers are not the bad women she is concerned with but part of the “we” used in making her claims for improvement. Therefore, her statement “it is not uncommon to find negatively amiable individuals, who sink under a weight of indolence, and suffer from innate selfishness a gradual contraction of mind, perpetually lamenting their own inability to do good” (11) takes the negative aspects of the characteristics of women of England off of her readers. She gives her audience the responsibility to make other women better by suggesting “we” should teach habits that will make these selfish women useful early in life to make them more willing and able to work for their families. The use of “we” and “us” in the first chapter forces Ellis’s readers into roles as explorers and students, which she uses as a way to build her credibility because these words imply that she is an explorer or student with them. Beason says that

“almost all people are more likely to accept and trust a communicator who is perceived as being ‘one of them,’ since such commonality gives the impression that communicator and audience share backgrounds, goals, and values” (331). Because Ellis makes statements like “this ought not to render us insensible to the high privileges of our favored country” and “the highest and holiest uses to which we can devote the talents committed to our trust” (15), Ellis identifies herself in “membership” (331) with her audience.

### **The Rhetor (ethos, credibility)**

In order for Ellis’s audience to accept her as a reliable rhetor of advice, she must project an ethos that her audience will accept. Ethos, or credibility, for Ellis is built by her ability to embody the domestic ideology through the advice she offers her audience. Because Ellis’s audience would have idolized her representation of the domestic ideology, Ellis easily encompasses the multi-faceted notions of ethos including: *areti*, *phronisis*, and *euonia*.

Ellis shows that the “embarrassed manner” of the women of England hides their true nature, which epitomizes the national ideals of the domestic sphere and women’s responsibilities in that sphere. Ellis accepts this tone as part of her persona as a rhetor and defines it within the confines of the domestic sphere, making it a positive, rather than a negative trait. Since Ellis is more commanding than a woman was expected to be, and is placing herself in the public sphere by publication, she must compensate for that in her writing to avoid being portrayed as masculine. Her portrayal of the value she sees in the domestic ideology creates her credibility as the concerned good woman. She brings equilibrium to her credibility by pointing to some of the faults found with the ideal

“domestic women” because of their almost obsessive value on their homes and families, which makes her seem less hostile. Ellis says that the women of England are “plebian,” “cold,” and “embarrassed” (11) in their manners upon first impressions, but she explains that once these women make acquaintances, they can be understood as having the “noblest passions, the deepest feelings, and the highest aspirations of humanity” (11). By characterizing and providing reason for women’s behavior, Ellis is making excuses for their negative presentation and impression to others. Because Ellis is very commanding in her address to the audience, she must show that there is a purpose to her “cold” commanding address.

*Areti- virtue, or good character*

Ellis idealizes the previous generation’s values, but she reprimands her own for letting home and family lose their places as the first priority. She says, in her admiration of the previous generation, “I consider the two excellencies [“mental improvement” and “moral discipline”] as having been combined in the greatest perfection in the general average of women who have now attained to middle, or rather advanced age” (1). Ellis suggests by this statement that women have begun to put themselves first, which is to the detriment of women’s role as domestic goddesses. Ellis’s notion of “mental improvement” and “moral discipline” is vital to understanding her areti, or virtue, as an advisor of the domestic sphere for women. This “improvement” or “discipline” is applicable to the notion of the “Cult of True Womanhood” because it is used in reference to women’s characters being developed to focus on their “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (Welter 152). Ellis uses phrases throughout *The Women of England* such as “moral worth,” “Divine blessing,” “Divine truth,” and “moral character” to show

her value of piety, and she incorporates phrases like “domestic usefulness” and “domestic character” to emphasize the importance of domesticity. Of the domestic sphere, she says, “not only must the house be neat and clean, but it must be so ordered as to suit the tastes of all, as far as may be, without annoyance or offence to any” (9). These notions that women’s duties were bound in the pleasures and comforts of the family align Ellis with the traditional values of the domestic sphere. Her idealization of the previous generation of women of England shows that she venerates the previous generation aligning her values with those of her audience.

Ellis refers to the positive attributes associated with the women of England in the past tense; women from the turn of the century (1799-1800) were the true ideal, while the women she is writing to are in no way close to those earlier women. Therefore, her representation of the role women should have in their homes is bound by “the customs of English society,” which “have so constituted women the guardians of the comfort of their homes, that, like the Vestals of old, they cannot allow the lamp they cherish to be extinguished, or to fail for want of oil, without an equal share of degradation attaching to their names” (9). Ellis uses the metaphor of the domestic women as “vestals” as a method to align these women with the functions expected of them by society in the domestic sphere.

Ellis represents domestic women as “vestals” because the vestals were pure, virginal women “whose term of service, though beginning at ages six to ten, was thirty years and frequently life long” (Parker 566). The correlation between the “vestals” and the domestic women is clear because their responsibilities span the largest part of their lifetime. Although women did not enter their roles in the domestic sphere until some

years after adolescence, their education for that role began early in childhood. Women's purity, in the nineteenth century, was prized, and their marriage signified a transition to their childbearing years, after which women were responsible for their children's education. This metaphor forces Ellis's audience to understand, as Barbara Welter explains, that "the attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity" (152). As vestals spend the greatest portion of their lives in education and duty, they are easily compared to the domestic woman; however, the vestal can also represent the domestic woman's religious value as the moral backbone of the family. Ellis continues the metaphor by giving the credit for women's ability to perform in the domestic space to the "prevalence of religious instruction" (14), and to their religious devotion.

In the first chapter of Ellis's *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*, she uses the very suggestive metaphor of women as flowers. Women, Ellis writes, are interesting displays: "there are flowers that burst upon us, and startle the eye with the splendor of their beauty; we gaze until we are dazzled, and then turn away, remembering nothing but their gorgeous hues" (11). This metaphor goes on to incorporate a male "traveler" who is refreshed "by the sweetness they diffuse," which is paralleled to the "unpretending virtues of the female character [that] force themselves upon our regard, so that the woman herself is nothing in comparison with her attributes" (11). The metaphor suggests the importance and value placed on moral virtue and the influence of women. Ellis goes on to say that "we remember less the celebrated belle, than her who made us happy" (11); the influence of her female readers is more valuable

than vain aspirations.

Because Ellis was writing during the Industrial Revolution, she also makes use of machinery metaphors to describe the domestic sphere. Ellis points out the very distinct skill necessary to keep the home in smooth working order, which she compares to the ability to work with machinery without breaking it, and she describes women as “this great engine of moral good” to show women’s place in the “machine” (69). Ellis uses the mechanical metaphor to determine the methods used to adequately maintain the domestic sphere, and she suggests it is imperative that “she has to calculate with precision[the wants and desires of the family], or the machinery of household comfort is arrested in its movements, and thrown into disorder” (8). Her use of this metaphor implies that women’s domestic duties relied on a systematic attention to detail; if these duties were not given the necessary attention, a negative chain of events would undermine the social order of domestic life. Ellis uses metaphors to reinforce the values she proposes for her audience, creating a virtuous ethos for her audience to endorse.

#### *Phronisis-practical wisdom*

As Aristotle suggests, unless rhetors have a practical knowledge base, the audience will not accept what is said as correct. Ellis must embody the practical knowledge of her role as a wife, mother, and household manager in order for her audience to appreciate the advice she has to offer them. Furthermore, Ellis’s writing, as Anna Johnston suggests, “outlined domestic roles for middle-class Victorian women in increasingly detailed and codified ways” (499). While Ellis describes in detail the roles of women in the home, her knowledge on the matter is strictly “codified” by her alignment with the traditional domestic sphere.

However, the notion that Ellis is “detailed” in describing domestic roles gets lost in the language she uses to codify it. For example, Ellis says, discussing women’s moral value, that “the personal services she is thus enabled to render, enhance her value in the domestic circle, and when such services are of an accomplished mind—above all, with the disinterested kindness of a generous heart—they not only dignify the performer, but confer happiness, as well as obligation” (4). Clearly, Ellis’s language here is full of abstractions, yet she expects that her audience will assume the meaning behind them because the values she proposes are shared between herself and the audience. For instance, the middle-class Victorian housewife may not completely understand what the “disinterested kindness of a generous heart” means in terms of her domestic duties. Ellis is able to bring her concern for England’s domestic ideology to the forefront of her readers’ attention and provides them with solutions to the changing values she observes. The distinct impression that Ellis gives readers is that the domestic woman is intelligent and the limited scope of her experience does not diminish her intelligence, as is seen in the following:

It is true, their [domestic women’s] sphere of observation was microscopic, compared with that of the individual who enjoys the means of traveling from court to court, and of mixing with the polished society of every nation; but an acute vision directed to immediate objects, whatever they may be, will often discover as much of the wonders of creation, and supply the intelligent mind with food for reflection as valuable, as that which is the result of a widely extended view, where the objects, though more numerous, are consequently less distinct (12).



The distinct reference to the domestic woman and her intelligence is brought up in the very next section as Ellis points to the woman's power of mind, as she is "not necessarily confined to a limited number of ideas" by her place in the domestic space (12). In fact, Ellis suggests being in the domestic space has the complete opposite effect, as "she [the domestic woman] is therefore sensible of defects within that sphere, which to a more extended vision, would be imperceptible" (13). The domestic woman, according to Ellis, is more perceptive to the minor details, which are most important to the happiness of her family.

*Eunoia-good will, or having the interests of the audience as a primary concern*

Ellis works to provide her readers with a sense of national importance, and she periodically incorporates women's national value into the forefront of her discussion. She says, in the first chapter, "still my opinion remains the same, that in the situation of the middle class of women in England, are combined advantages in the formation of character, to which they owe much of their distinction, and their country much of her moral worth" (10). Here Ellis places women as the moral backbone of England, and because she does so, she gives her readers both a sense of value and importance in the national climate of Britain. The limitations of the domestic woman's experience can be to the advantage of the domestic woman and her family, as Ellis suggests:

It is possible she may sometimes attach too much importance to the minutiae of her own domestic world, especially when her mind is imperfectly cultivated and informed: but, on the other hand, there arises, from the same cause, a scrupulous exactness, a studious observance, of the means of happiness, a delicacy of perception, a purity of mind, and a dignified correctness of manner, for which the

women of England are unrivalled by those of any other nation (13).

Ellis acknowledges that these domestic women are incredibly obsessive, but she seems to believe that this behavior produces the ideal wife, mother, and home manager because of their constant observance of the “minutiae” in the home. It is because of the “minutiae” that women become the idealized version of the domestic wife, translating the obsessive tendencies, which can be interpreted negatively and limiting to some, into the ideal representation of the domestic English woman.

Because Ellis has aligned her values with those of her audience and built her concern for the domestic up to be a national crisis, her audience easily acknowledges her appeals. Ellis uses this crisis to turn the pathos of her audience in her favor. The presentation of an impending national crisis allows her tone to become admirable as she suggests solutions to it. Ellis maneuvers around her own values by suggesting the national crisis began in the home. Therefore, Ellis’s ethos is effective because she idealizes the traits of the matured women of the domestic sphere.

Furthermore, using the feminine pronoun to refer to the nation, Ellis is able to bring the domestic sphere into alignment with national significance. Ellis refers to England as a “she” on numerous occasions within the first chapter of *The Women of England*. Her use of personification places the nation in a feminine persona, which helps establish the domestic ideology as a national characteristic. Because of the reference of the nation as “she,” Ellis is bringing the domestic woman alongside the queen and country. She says:

the national characteristics of England are the perpetual boast of her patriotic sons; and there is one especially, which it behooves all British subjects not only to

exult in, but to cherish and maintain. Leaving the justice of her laws, the extent of her commerce, and the amount of her resources, to the orator, the statesman, and the political economist, there yet remains one of the noblest features in her national character, which may not improperly be regarded as within the compass of a woman's understandings and the province of a woman's pen (1).

Ellis is able to show her audience from sections, like above, that she is not overstepping her domestic territory in writing this manual. Because Queen Victoria represents the ideals of an English woman as the figure-head for England, she pulls the entire nation into the domestic sphere with the values associated with her and the nation. Her representation of the national identity encompassing the importance of family values epitomizes the English ideals of the domestic sphere and the woman's place in the home. By personifying England as a woman, Ellis is able to set up Britain's greatest national characteristic as the domestic woman and the idealized representation of that ideal through the gendering of the nation.

### **Conclusion**

Ellis praises the previous generation and its value of domestic responsibility, while she blames her own generation because of their selfish desire for education and their disinterest in their moral responsibilities in the domestic sphere. To Ellis, women are failing in their duty as moral guardian of home and their families. Ellis writes to women who share in the idealization of their domestic responsibilities. She is proposing advice through her discourse focusing on, in Ellis's perspective, a national crisis. She sees the degradation of moral character on a national scale, which she uses as her rhetorical situation; therefore, she is using crisis rhetoric in an epideictic fashion to advise

her readers to action or reform.

Ellis uses tactics like metaphor, personification, nationalism, and crisis rhetoric to make her audience feel guilty and to initiate action; she suggests they improve their peers with the guilt she projects for her audience to accept. She expects her audience to share the national identity she professes, and the ethos, or credibility, she has created through her identification with the domestic ideology leads to her audience's acceptance of her notion of improvement and change in the domestic sphere for the good of the nation.

## Chapter 2

“[...] I am bound to tell the best I know about Household Education; and on that, as on most subjects, the best we have to tell is our own experience” Harriet Martineau from *Household Education* (39).

### Introduction

Harriet Martineau published regularly from 1822 to 1869, and has been called “one of the Victorian era’s primary cultural influences” and one of “its premier woman reformist writers” (Logan 3). In 1849 Martineau wrote *Household Education* in order to begin a dialogue among her peers. Nineteenth-century domestic ideology placed women in the role of primary educator for their children and families, so it is no surprise that Martineau writes to her peers about *Household Education*. She has observed a variety of consequences of educational practices which she shares with her audience; this enables her to project authority connected to individual experiences even while Martineau professes that comprehensive authority on her subject cannot exist.

Although Martineau denies that anyone can have complete authority on the subject of household education, she takes on the role of definer which provides her with automatic authority as rhetor. Martineau writes to women who desire an educational discourse, and she provides such a discourse with her observations in the home about the extremes in educational opportunities. The exigency of her rhetorical situation arises when families misunderstand the nature of education and deny the value of education; this allows Martineau, as rhetor, to suggest change and improvement to her audience. Martineau writes to encourage a dialogue between women in the domestic sphere about education in the home. She is not simply dispensing advice, but attempting to create a dialogue among her peers. The key to her strategy as rhetor in *Household Education* is to construct her audience as her equals. Martineau uses many different rhetorical devices,

such as emphasizing through social ideals and educating through narrative, and she does this in such a way as to elevate both her credibility and the expectations for the audience.

### **Rhetorical Situation**

#### *Background: A Context for Educational Reform*

In the nineteenth century, education was primarily the responsibility of the mother, and only when it was financially possible were boys sent to school. Kathryn Gleadle asserts that “particularly in the middle classes, mothers were typically responsible for their children’s education (although where it was affordable, boys might be educated by a tutor or at school once they reached primary school age)” (82). Because education was provided by the mother of a family, “doubtlessly, in many households the instruction given was limited, perhaps revolving around basic literacy and biblical teaching, and for their daughters’ tuition in domestic skills, particularly sewing” (Gleadle 82). Martineau’s call for educational reform addresses such limitations of educational opportunities available to families, and she initiates a dialogue in order to help women better serve their families in their role as educator.

As a rhetorical strategy, Martineau brings her audience into the text by creating a dialogue with her readers, establishing her own credibility. Martineau tells her audience that “It seems to me that all that we can do is to reflect, and say what we think, and learn of one another” (1), which shows that she is engaging her audience in a dialogue. Martineau goes so far as to say that “it will be for my readers to discover whether they agree in my views”(1) giving the audience a role to play while reading her discourse, and she tells them “I have no ambition to teach”(1) to make sure the audience understands her purpose is to initiate a dialogue and not to simply tell them the proper way to educate.

Martineau finds that it is simply a misunderstanding that causes the failures in education because she quite obviously believes the opportunity is there for the optimum education, but she suggests that “WHATEVER [emphasis in original] method parents may choose for educating their child, they must have some idea in their minds of what they would have him turn out” (21) in order to make certain parents have specific expectations for their children. Furthermore, the notion that Martineau suggests that parents have expectations and not step into educating without them underscores the importance of having a plan of action rather than simply guessing at it. Martineau is trying to initiate a discourse on household education, and she wants this because she believes there is a happy medium in the methods of education. She sees a dichotomy in the education provided to the upper and lower classes and the distribution of educational responsibilities between men and women, and she wants to find a middle ground for the middle-class family. To Martineau, the importance of a full, equal, and lifelong education in the domestic sphere is the situation which causes her to write.

#### *Audience and Modification*

Martineau identifies her audience and works to build community with her audience. She does so by saying “we are all children together” which implies that Martineau includes herself in this community (7). She writes to the “ordinary English parent” or everyday people, and offers advice that anyone would want for their family (22). Martineau defines her audience even further by building up the potential of her readers saying, “so great a multitude is included in the middle classes” (33), which shows the variety of people included in the middle class to which she is directing her writing.

In order to show her audience the situation for which she writes, Martineau must first provide them with the ideal that they must strive to reach. She says, “Every member of the household—children, servants, apprentices—every inmate of the dwelling, must share in the family plan; or those who make it are despots, and those who are excluded are slaves” (2). To Martineau everyone should have equal access to educational opportunities, and she includes the working classes in her proposition for educational reform because the best way to improve their situation was education, just like everyone else. To emphasize that everyone has a role in education in the home, Martineau says, “the loftiest and the lowliest, the purest and the most criminal, the wisest and the most ignorant, are comprehended under the process of household education” (27). Martineau’s goal is the continuation of education throughout the lives of all people. The notion that education is a lifelong endeavor helps Martineau build a community with her audience, which in itself makes a dialogue among peers possible.

### **Rhetor (Ethos, credibility)**

In building an ethos, Martineau questions the comprehensiveness of any authority coming before her, suggesting that “Household Education is a subject so important in its bearings on every one’s happiness, and so inexhaustible in itself, that I do not see how any person whatever can undertake to lecture upon it authoritatively, as if it was a matter completely known and entirely settled” (1). While there can be no complete authority on household education, Martineau professes she has some authority on the subject by defining the paradigm that is *Household Education*. Education is different for everyone, a multifaceted, never-ending endeavor.

*Areti- Virtue or character*



Since the social hierarchy was divided into separate spheres based on gender, Martineau suggests parents make use of it. Women's duties defined them as caretakers for the family, while men were considered knowledgeable and educated because of their public experience; Martineau suggests that parents make use of this dichotomy in order to provide their children with a well-rounded education. Martineau shows the best possible scenario for educating children that includes both parents in their socially expected roles within the separate spheres. It is important for Martineau's readers to understand that

During the day hours, the earnest pupil learns of Nature by the lessons she gives in the melting fire, the rushing water, the unseen wind, the plastic metal or clay, the variegated wood or marble, the delicate cotton, silk, or wool; and at evening he learns of men—of the wise and genial men who have delivered the best parts of their minds in books, and made of them a sort of ethereal vehicle, in which they can come at a call to visit any secret mind which desires communion with them (31).

Because Martineau addresses both parents, and their responsibilities for their children's education, her audience would see that she understands and is willing to work within the ideology of the Victorian family.

Martineau believes that both mothers and fathers have an equal part in their child's education: "At the outset of life, they are tended by their mother, owing directly to her their food and clothes, their lullaby and their incitement to play. During the day, they are under her eye; and in the evening they sit on their father's knee, and get knowledge or fun from him" (31). Both parents should take part in their children's education so that "the children learn that it is an honour to be useful, and a comfort and blessing to be neat

and industrious” (32). Martineau comes across as virtuous to her audience because they share a common value, education, and they both want to achieve their potential in that education for the improvement of their nation. Therefore, Martineau breaks down the child’s education according to the roles each parent should play, maintaining a clear gender-based dichotomy between parental duties.

Women in the nineteenth century were expected to be the moral center of the domestic sphere, with an extensive knowledge of the Bible and use it in the education of children; Martineau’s use of religious doctrine exemplifies her embodiment of piety, and was in line with those social expectations which, according to Barbara Welter in the “Cult of True Womanhood,” defines women’s roles according to four cardinal virtues—“piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (152). Martineau frequently includes religious ideas to impress upon her readers her knowledge of religious teachings, because “[. . .] by including references to biblical texts and to their own efforts on behalf of ‘God’s work,’ women deliberately supplemented such allusions to their moral worth [. . .]” (Mattingly 17). References to both the Bible and the teachings associated with the church allow Martineau to portray herself as pious, which adds to her credibility because it aligns her character with the ideology of the domestic woman.

In addition to parents’ roles, Martineau also addresses the Church’s role in children’s education. Martineau argues that the teachings offered by the church are often insufficient, saying that “It is not enough that in church he [the child] hears that all men and women are sinners; and that in prayers at home he hears his parents pray that they may become more worthy of the goodness of God, and more like the Christ who is set before them” (3). Martineau points out where the Church falls short in its educational

attempts, and uses her extended knowledge of the Bible to suggest that “while it is, and ever will be, of the utmost importance that we should preserve the aim of becoming like Christ, it yet remains to be settled among us, in fact though not perhaps in words, what Christ was, the images of him in different minds varying so endlessly as they certainly do” (12), which shows that she has seen and accepts varying interpretations of the ideal.

*Phronisis- Practical Wisdom*

Martineau’s practical wisdom on the subject of household education is somewhat problematic, at first glance, because she never married and had no children of her own; however, she was an avid observer of domestic life, and she wrote extensively on the cultural phenomena of her time. Harriet Martineau “from the 1832 through the 1867 Reform Bills, was at the forefront of the period’s social and political debates” (Logan 4), and because she was such a prolific, and highly regarded author, her credibility was well established by the time *Household Education* was published. Martineau provides herself credibility by not claiming complete authority, but by making it clear to readers that she is sharing her observations. Writing directly to middle-class married women and mothers, she covers subjects that were most relevant for the best possible maintenance of her readers’ own children. Martineau’s view of the dilemma of infallible authority on the subject of household education lends to her own wisdom in this context.

By offering her readers suggestions based on her own observations, Martineau enables her readers to make choices based on their individual needs. She clarifies this for her audience, saying that she has “a strong desire to set members of households consulting together about their course of action towards each other” (1). Martineau’s advice is relaxed and modest, and it comes from her own observations. By professing that

there is no way to be a real authority on the subject of household education, Martineau establishes a certain amount of instant credibility because she is able to mediate between personal observations and the ideals maintained by society.

Martineau shows the importance of ideals in society by creating an oxymoron, the “law of opinion,” the weight that social expectations have on the people of England. In the fourth chapter of Martineau’s *Household Education*, she uses the phrase “law of Opinion” ten times within the five pages of the chapter. By repeating the phrase, Martineau gives social norms the status of “law,” which lets her draw on the authority of society; the domestic ideology Martineau presents shows “there is a law of opinion in every society as to what people should be” (21), which means that this “law of opinion” is essentially social expectation. Of course, opinions are not “law,” but Martineau shows her audience that they are, in fact, vital to individual success.

Martineau goes on to epitomize achievement of the social expectations and makes the case for individuals achieving their potential, positing a hypothesis for her audience to consider: “Let us conceive of a county of England where every inhabitant should be not only saved from ignorance, but having every power of body and mind made the very most of” (25). Martineau’s audience should live up to its full potential, or at the very least, make an attempt at it. To justify her claims about the nation’s values, Martineau explains that “I need not consider it further: for I write for those who have a high purpose and high hope in rearing children. Those who despond are unfit for the charge, and are not likely to enter into any consultations about it” (34). This comment implies that those who do not or have not read her work are insufficient parents, but those who are interested will read her work. Martineau praises the value of a full, equal, and lifelong

education, while condemning the incomplete and inconsistent education of the mass population.

*Eunoia-Goodwill*

In order for her audience to reach her expectations, Martineau gives them a role to play while reading which emphasizes that learning is a lifelong process, and one that she sees as being beneficial to her audience. Martineau informs her audience that “it will be for [her] readers to discover [. . .] whether their minds are set to work by what [she] say[s] on a matter which concerns them as seriously as any in the world” (1). While Martineau gives her readers the authority of making the final decision about the household education of their families, she places great value on everything being done to its absolute best. Martineau instills in her audience the notion that they have potential; she then shows them that reaching that potential is possible and the ultimate goal. Martineau tells her audience, “I write for those who have a high purpose and a high hope in rearing children” (34). Therefore, she is raising the bar of expectation, presenting them with her good will in the hope that it will be reciprocated. The role her audience will play in the education of their household is all-important, for her family plan is “the grand comprehensive plan which is alone worthy of people who care about education at all” (2). Martineau makes clear that if her audience does not place the same value on education as she does, they will not be getting as much out of what she has to offer on the subject because it requires a lot from the audience.

Martineau’s presumptions about the values of her peers suggest she recognizes a national identity and embraces it. She expects a solidarity within her audience as she explains “We are all agreed, from end to end of society, that Truthfulness, Integrity,

Courage, Purity, Industry, Benevolence, and a spirit of Reverence for sacred things are inexpressibly desirable and excellent” (22). Because Martineau presumes her audience will share in the above values, she clearly believes in a common bond between herself and the audience she addresses in *Household Education*. As Beason explains, “when the speakers point out similarities between themselves and their audiences,” audiences are more likely to accept the rhetor as having “group membership” with the audience (331). The bond built between Martineau and her audience is the most important aspect of her authority as a rhetor because it aligns her rhetorical purpose and her ethos. She writes to initiate a dialogue with her peers, and, in doing so, she is also creating a community of the domestic sphere to persuade her audience to change the shape of household education. Martineau’s ability to align herself within a community, which includes her audience, is aided by her demonstration of “an optimistic, confident attitude conducive to future success” (Beason 338), which she does consistently by making clear that her audience can reach its potential. Her readers can assume she has their best interests in mind when suggesting educational reform because she herself is invested in the interest of the community she is building.

Martineau’s use of “first-person pronouns and self-referential third-person pronouns” makes her relatable because “it is difficult for people to talk about themselves without also revealing something about themselves” (Beason 328). Beason calls this “signalled ethos,” and Martineau uses it to build a community with her audience. As Beason suggests, “with signalled ethos, the communicator’s persona is moved toward the forefront of the message, offering what is likely the most conspicuous opportunity—whether intended or not—for an audience to focus on what the text suggests about the

communicator as a person” (328). Therefore, the audience is able to relate to Martineau and share in her observations, which align her as part of the community she is attempting to build with her audience.

Martineau makes use of “we” when she is constructing the evidence for her claims. In this way, she is bringing her audience into her experiences and showing them her point of view: “As long as we see one single instance of a mind expanding [. . .] we perceive that education may go on to the extreme limit of life, and should suppose that it might be generally so, but for the imperfect training of preceding years” (4). This audience inclusiveness creates the sense that the audience has had these experiences, which is helpful to Martineau’s credibility because it implies she and her readers have shared experiences.

Martineau uses “we,” “us,” and “our” to make a claim on her audiences’ observations or experience as well as her own, using them in phrasing such as “we know,” “our best knowledge,” and “it is clear to us” (3). She presumes that her audience knows, understands, and agrees with the information she puts forth, which implies a preconceived notion of her character and credibility. For example, she says “I rather think the prevailing belief is [. . .]” (3). She presumes to know the views of the majority, and she believes she knows what “this prevailing belief arises from” (4). By using “I,” Martineau does not attempt to align herself with her audience, but she directs her discourse to a very specific audience that would have the same nationalistic ideals. By representing social ideals in narrative form, Martineau shows her audience the best possible method to achieve the ideal. Her discourse of social ideals brings home her point of equality in education and influences her readers to provide this education to their

families. In trying to reach such perfection, she says, “It cannot be too carefully remembered that what I am speaking of is human Powers and Faculties; and that every power which a human being possesses may be exercised to good, and is actually necessary to make him perfect” (27). This statement shows both how important this ideal is and how it can be used once it has been acquired. Martineau shows her audience the potential of educational opportunities by revealing the dichotomies that exist in education between the education of a “royal child” and a “pauper child” (27-30). Martineau idealizes the potential of education while she initiates a dialogue with her audience in order to show that they can achieve their potential.

The use of narratives throughout the text shows both that Martineau is a studious observer of the domestic world around her, and that there is a serious inequality in the range of education available to her readers. Martineau goes on to point out the problems with both the “royal child,” who “must, of course, be trained at home;” for “little princes and princesses cannot be sent to school [...however,...] while reared in the house with their parents, the influences they are under scarcely agree with our ideas of home,” and the “pauper child,” whose parents are “either sickly, or foolish, or idle, or dissolute; or they would not be in a state of permanent pauperism” (27-30). The problem Martineau sees with the inequality of educational opportunities based on class suggests that the “royal child” and the “pauper child” both have inadequate educations, and there should be a “golden mean” between them that will satisfy as the ideal of education.

Martineau writes because there is a dichotomous nature to education among the classes and genders, and she hopes to remove that dichotomy by showing her audience the opportunities they have available in the realm of household education. Because of the



prevalence of domestic ideology in Victorian society, Martineau had to confine *Household Education* within its framework. While some boys were sent to school around age six, girls were kept in the home to be educated in the roles and responsibilities of household management because schools for girls were not prevalent until the mid-1860s (Gleadle 140). Therefore, Martineau represents the ideal in her text to produce, for her audience, their potential of influence as educators. Given that Martineau describes the “golden mean” in terms of it fitting in somewhere between the education of the “royal child” and the “pauper child,” she can more readily meet her goals of initiating a dialogue because she does not expressly define that “golden mean” to her audience (27-33). She is asking her readers to find this “golden mean” and makes clear that it can be found within the middle classes as she writes “the condition which appears to me to be the point of the greatest number of good influences is that of the best order of artisans” (31). Although Martineau does not define artisan further, she leaves it up to the audience to make the distinction from their own observations of life and leaves her audience to discover “that condition [which] affords the meeting point of book-knowledge and that which is derived from personal experience” (31). Therefore, Martineau’s audience must discover their own concept of the “golden mean” (27).

While Martineau’s narratives provide her readers with the differences between classes in education, they fail to offer actual suggestions on how the audience should attempt its own household educational endeavors. In reference to the education of a “royal child” and that of a “pauper child,” Martineau says that “The condition about half way between them appears to me to be the most favorable, on the whole for making the most of a human being, and best fulfilling the purpose of his life” (30). Her narratives

provide the audience with the extremes of each class, but she is unable to provide any kind of concrete advice that would let her audience know what it should do.

When discussing the roles both parents should play in the education of their families, Martineau separates their duties by the prescriptive nature associated with gender and the ideology of the separate spheres. From the mother “the children learn that it is an honour to be useful, and a comfort and blessing to be neat and industrious,” while from the father “the children see what a privilege and recreation reading is [ . . . ] and they grow up with a reverence and love for that great resource” (32). Martineau puts the notion of gender dichotomies in narrative form showing that “the little girl who tends the baby, or helps granny, or makes father’s shirt, or learns to cook the dinner, is likely to put more mind into her work” than if otherwise taught to sew, and “the boy who carries the coals for his mother, or helps his father in the workshop [ . . . ] will become manly earlier and more naturally than the highborn child” whose experiences are limited to his parents (32). While Martineau suggests both parents take the time to educate their children by making them useful in the home, she uses generalities to make the case for it in such phrasing as “tends the baby” and “helps his father” to show her audience the variety that can be included in this education if both parents make an effort to work toward their potential as educators.

She uses inserted narratives to make her point tangible to her audience. For example, she says the following:

I have known of one old man whose mind was certainly still growing when he died, at the age of eighty-six. I have known of another, whose study through life had been the laws of the mind, and who, when his faculties were failing him,

applied himself to that study, marking the gradual decline of certain of his powers, adding the new facts to his stores of knowledge, and thus nourishing to the last a part of his mind with the decay of the rest (4).

With this narrative, Martineau provides her readers with examples from her own observations which clarify the purpose of her writing; however, the responsibilities she gives her readers are very labor intensive. The narratives function to show the dichotomies present in education and to show her audience that the “golden mean” can be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

Martineau recognizes the educational paradigm’s dichotomous nature, related to both gender and class, and she suggests that everyone take part in a full and lifelong education. Martineau’s credibility is significantly strengthened by urging her readers toward educational achievement because it proves she is a charitable person interested in the improvement of education for her middle-class audience. Giving her audience the freedom to make their own choices about their family’s education shows that Martineau has the practical knowledge to know that education is different for everyone, but she expects commitment from her readers to strive to meet their potential. Because Martineau is attempting to reform education, her middle-class audience had to value this reform and be fairly progressive thinkers in their own lives. Her narratives and generalizations about education show her audience the dichotomies within education and engage them in an ongoing investigation into the ways to reform their household education.

### Chapter 3

Traditional Aristotelian understandings of epideictic rhetoric hold that “[t]he ceremonial orator is, properly speaking, concerned with the present, since all men praise or blame in view of the state of things existing at the time, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses at the future” (Aristotle, Trans. Roberts 13). Aristotle describes epideictic rhetoric as follows: “The elements of an epideictic speech are (a) praise and (b) blame” and notes that “to the epideictic speaker, above all, belongs the present, for every one praises or blames with regard to existing conditions [qualities], though a speaker often adds to resources with reminiscences from the past and conjectures about the future” (Aristotle, Trans. Cooper 17-8). Because epideictic rhetoric is concerned with present “conditions,” the insight into the value system of the audience is required in order to persuade them.

Although epideictic rhetoric is traditionally thought of as ceremonial in nature, its focus on praise and blame and the notion of the shared value system between audience and rhetor provides a clear rationale for the conduct manual being discussed as a genre of epideictic rhetoric. In defining epideictic rhetoric Aristotle says, “Now praise may be serious, or it may be trivial; nor does it always concern a human being or a god, for often enough it is applied to inanimate things, or to some insignificant animal” (46).

While typical analyses of epideictic rhetoric focus on presidential speeches (Dow), political discourse (Hauser), business speeches (Kenton and Beason), and funeral orations (Condit and Rollins), discourse that is not ceremonial or delivered in a public setting has also been treated as epideictic: women’s periodicals (Summers), and African-American didactic literature (White). Cynthia Sheard goes as far as to say that “epideictic discourse

today operates in contexts civic, professional or occupational, pedagogical, and so on” (771), which implies that the reach of epideictic rhetoric is far beyond the traditional ceremonial presentation normally associated with it. Presidential speeches and funeral orations are ceremonial, but the language in women’s periodicals and African-American didactic literature is clearly value laden, with an emphasis on praise and blame characteristic of epideictic rhetoric. Because the conduct manuals Ellis and Martineau write are built on a shared value system with their audiences, their strategy of praise and blame in order to provoke improvement in the home epitomizes the notion of epideictic rhetoric. The conduct manual becomes a means of persuading their readers to profess to national values in the domestic sphere.

Martineau praises a full and lifelong education which is a value she expects her readers to share. She recognizes class and gender inequalities in the failures of household education. Kathryn Summers argues that to recognize women’s periodical literature of the nineteenth century as epideictic is to see that it “attempts to reduce opportunities for opposition or debate by masking itself as simple praise or blame and by assuming that the rhetor and the audience are already in agreement” (Summers 263); the same can be said for Martineau and Ellis’s conduct manuals as a genre of epideictic rhetoric. Ellis and Martineau’s ability to persuade their audience is strengthened by their use of the conduct manual as a genre of epideictic rhetoric because the conduct manual puts the rhetor in alignment with the values of the intended audience.

Mark Bernard White, in his article about African American didactic literature as epideictic, says “Epideictic often does not seem ‘rhetorical’ compared with forensic and deliberative. Its power to persuade and to shape character derives in significant part from

its appeal to a sense of identity and to values that are intended to go unquestioned” (130). Ellis and Martineau’s conduct manuals are also epideictic, expressing a set of values their audience can identify with. Kathryn Summers, in her discussion of the *Englishwoman’s Review of Social and Industrial Questions*, notes that “examples of epideictic rhetoric are a primary discursive site for negotiating the values that inform decision-making and orient actions within a culture; they are also involved in constructing both individual subjectivity and social attitudes and beliefs” (263). Because Ellis’s focus is on the traditional values of the patriarchal ideology---women maintaining their roles in the domestic sphere---and Martineau is focusing on the value of educational opportunities as a method of change and improvement, they are in opposition; the value system they expect of their audiences shows that Ellis is a traditionalist and Martineau a social reformer and feminist. Understanding this genre as epideictic rhetoric helps us appreciate how Martineau’s text can frame a call for change in a voice that sounds like a traditional domestic woman, while Ellis’s incorporation of those traditional values express the need to return to the traditional domestic woman.

White explains further that “it [epideictic rhetoric] may therefore seem genuinely to address nothing subject to dispute or contention. But just because the values and assumptions that it appeals to are accepted by the audience does not mean that there is no matter at issue” (130). While Ellis uses a rhetoric of national crisis to reinforce a traditional value system, Martineau creates a persona representing those traditional values in order to initiate reform, without coming across as a radical. Both women write about the potential of their peers in such a way that it draws on what White describes as a key feature of epideictic rhetoric: “epideictic rhetoric can function to edify character by

calling or challenging its audience to become their better, nobler, braver, and more virtuous selves” (White 130). Ellis persuades her audience that they should focus their time and energy on becoming the best housewife through their place as the moral center of the home; Martineau persuades her audience to embrace a full and lifelong education and to instill that value into their families: both women create their discourse to improve the state of the nation. They are able to do so because their rhetoric is “aiming toward the inner life of its audience,” and “it enacts rhetoric for the private person within a public context” (White 130). Therefore, Ellis—to return to an earlier value system—and Martineau—to reform the current value system—focus their attention on the private, domestic sphere to initiate change on a public, national scale. While these manuals do not seem to engage in political discourse, they should be understood within the context of the social and political changes going on during the Victorian period.

Although the Victorian era was a time of great social, economic, and technological change, some of these changes did not have any legal effects on the domestic sphere until the later part of the century. While the Married Women’s Property Acts (1870 & 1882)<sup>1</sup> and the Guardianship of Infants Act (1886)<sup>2</sup> generally improved the status of women and children across the board, the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857)<sup>3</sup> and the Contagious Diseases Act (1864)<sup>4</sup> were clearly prejudiced against specific social groups of women. The class prejudice built into such laws perpetuated inequality, not only between the classes, but between genders as well because of the favored treatment

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<sup>1</sup> Women could keep 200 pounds of their earnings (1870) and continue on as the owners and administrators of their property after marriage (1882)

<sup>2</sup> Gave women more opportunity of custody after divorce with the welfare of the child in the mind of the judge

<sup>3</sup> Divorce courts established with limited access, divorce could be obtained for reasons other than proven adultery, protection orders must be in place in the case of a husband’s desertion.

<sup>4</sup> Required women suspect of prostitution to undergo compulsory medical examinations, those with venereal disease were quarantined in hospitals until cured.

of men in the legal and economic system. The apparently sheltered space of the home was increasingly invaded by the class and gender conflicts of the nineteenth century. Etiquette guides and conduct manuals influenced women's education in and out of the home while perpetuating inequalities for women as defined by these texts written in a patriarchal social structure. Although the most famous guides and manuals were written by women, a woman's role in the home was clearly defined by gender inequalities.

In these manuals and guidebooks, the education of boys and girls was defined differently: middle- and upper-class girls were educated by their governess or, if money was not available for such expenses, mothers took on the role of educator, while boys were sent to school for a formal education. While a boy's education prepared him for the position of a wage earner in society, a girl's education simply set her up to become a marriageable woman. Boys learned Greek and Latin, mathematical skills, sciences, and, depending on career choices available, job related material. Girls, on the other hand, learned French, music, drawing, sewing, and reading, which, as their talents were acquired, gave them ample opportunity to marry and improve their social status.

Women's roles varied by class; however, the aspirations of the middle classes were to imitate the upper classes. Elizabeth Langland explains that, because "[a] bourgeois wife decided upon the household help required, drew up job descriptions, advertised, interviewed, hired, supervised, paid and fired," her education could prepare her to perform these tasks more easily (127). The conduct manuals and etiquette guides published to aid in the domestic woman's ventures represent idealized versions of women who were successful in the maintenance of their home. The guides could help a woman save money for her family, otherwise "clever servants could cheat a family out of



hundreds of pounds in the course of a year” (Langland 128). Therefore, the domestic woman’s education was vital to the smooth management of the home and family.

Kathryn Gleadle notes that a proper marriage for nineteenth-century “landed women” meant that they were improving their social status; therefore, middle- to upper-class marriage “entailed the setting up of a costly establishment; extending their family’s influence; and assuming philanthropic, social, and often political obligations” (80).

Oftentimes, the woman’s responsibility was to aid in making these “obligations” turn into advancements for their families.

The dispute over values is minimized by assuming that the audience and the rhetors, both Ellis and Martineau, share in the prescriptive nature of the same domestic ideology. Harriet Martineau takes on a completely different attitude than Sarah Stickney Ellis in that she gives her audience the choice to reform their own domestic pursuits, rather than imposing authority or responsibility. Martineau offers advice from her own observations of life, which is strikingly different from Ellis’s perspective on the matter, pointing out to her audience: “It seems to me that all that we can do is to reflect, and say what we think, and learn of one another” (1). Ellis tells women they should do good things for others, and, by doing so, they can impress upon others a positive perception of themselves. Directing her language to the women of England, Ellis says, “you have great responsibilities, you have urgent claims; a nation’s moral wealth is in your keeping”(2), which imposes a sense of accountability for the nation on the reader. Instead of imposing accountability like Ellis does, Martineau tries the more persuasive method of suggesting to her readers that reforming educational value in the home is the path to improvement.

Martineau gives her readers options; Ellis simply places blame on “them” and suggests to her audience what they should be doing for their families and peers.

Ellis and Martineau build credibility by showing their readers that they have *areti*, *euonia*, and *phronisis*, so the audience will in turn respond to and appreciate the rhetor offering advice through the conduct manual. Both women represent the domestic sphere and the roles associated with that sphere in order to be perceived as credible rhetors in their respective manuals. According to Mattingly, “purity was a prerequisite for credibility and respectability for nineteenth-century women, and convention held that purity was impossible for women except in the domestic sphere” (17); thus, the focus of the conduct manual on the domestic sphere gives the author credibility. Ellis and Martineau are able to establish credibility by showing their audience that they have the practical wisdom, good will, and virtue necessary to advise women in the domestic sphere, which are all qualities of an effective rhetor.

Ellis presumes her audience will value the traditional domestic ideology and accept the roles of women within that ideology, and she shows that the gender-separation of the prescribed private (domestic) and public (masculine) spheres is an important aspect to understanding women’s national value. She uses this division between gender roles to praise the moral character of the previous generation’s women and blame the women of her own generation for the deterioration of their moral character (1), this praise and blame being a key characteristic of epideictic rhetoric. Because Ellis defines her exigency as the “deteriorating [ . . . ] moral character” of the women of England, she is able to elevate the problem to a national crisis. Ellis frames this national crisis through

metaphors to show her middle-class audience the value of the moral character in the domestic sphere and its influence on the nation.

Harriet Martineau aligns with her readers on the value of a full and lifelong education, and she uses that value to initiate a dialogue among women in the domestic sphere about their role as educator to their families. Because Martineau highlights valuing education as the method of improvement in the nation, she shows its importance in the domestic sphere where women were the primary educators. Martineau blames class and gender dichotomies and laziness for the nation's failing value of education in the home. In order to make education equal for everyone, Martineau must outline differences along both class and gender lines, and she must be able to point out the "golden mean" between them. She does this by using narratives and various hypothetical situations to show her audience's potential and the importance of social values. Although Martineau uses the domestic sphere as a gateway for reform, she is progressive for her time because she is initiating reform and equality between class and gender.

Martineau and Ellis are saying, essentially, the same thing: the domestic woman needs to change/improve herself in order to better influence her family. Their methods are different: Ellis suggests that change is the responsibility of the domestic woman as the moral center of the family, while Martineau suggests it is through a full and lifelong education that women can improve the nation. Both Martineau and Ellis expect the same thing: national improvement made through the domestic sphere. Because Ellis and Martineau use the value systems of the domestic sphere to make their claims of improvement, one traditional and one reformer, they represent themselves as rhetors who share in that value system with their audience, and they do so to persuade their audience

to action while not appearing to call for anything different than they are already doing. As such, their conduct manuals fall into the genre of epideictic rhetoric.

Because of the value system both Ellis and Martineau subscribe to in their texts, clearly both women expected their audiences to believe in that system as well. The fact that they are initiating change and/or improvement to the value system they prescribe lends to the conduct manual's classification as a genre of epideictic rhetoric because persuasion through blame and praise is the most basic characteristic of epideictic rhetoric. Ellis brings the national crisis to the home by suggesting that the individual crises of the domestic sphere have an impact on a national level. Martineau exemplifies building a community with her audience, and she does this in order to initiate a dialogue with her peers.

Epideictic rhetoric is more than simply ceremonial speeches or discourse; by understanding this, scholars of rhetoric will be able to explore the value-laden contexts of many different types of rhetoric. Because these manuals were about things that took place in the domestic, private sphere, separate from the public sphere with its stereotypical examples of epideictic rhetoric, the discourse of the domestic sphere was not thought of by rhetoricians as epideictic. Yet, because the conduct manuals are so steeped in the values the rhetors assume of the audience, classifying the conduct manual as epideictic is a logical claim. We can learn much about this discourse and about epideictic rhetoric if we broaden our definitions of epideictic to include this common genre of didactic literature by and for females.

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